Houei and Nam mean river in Laotian, as in other T'ai languages.

10: d'Orleans--277 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 124, 177, 192, 563, 802 Ethnic subgroups

"I am trying to make a lexicon of their [LSS: Kha boatmen, in the service of a Laotian] language; they answer us, but sometimes we have a great deal of trouble in hearing what they say, and particularly in separating the affixes or suffixes, with which they can surround the same word. I notice the absence of special names for certain classes of things; they have no word for bread and the names of the numerals, except the four first, are borrowed from the Laotians; lastly mother is called ma, the word in general use amongst nearly all the peoples of the world, perhaps because it is the first sound that a newborn infant instinctively produces, when it requires food."

643 canton heads and heads of villages, who might be described as cantonal and municipal delegates, gather in the capital of the muong to 646 vote on the names of candidates which are presented. The name of the one who obtains the most votes is then presented by the province administrator to the superior resident, who accepts or rejects him after studying his personal qualities, his aptitudes, his background, etc. In the case of a rejection the electors are consulted a second time. The superior resident names the four chiefs of muongs by delegation from the governor general. These latter may not begin office until they receive their commission, insignia and seal from the French government.

In general, the electors' choice falls on a son, brother or nephew of the high official who is to be replaced, unless he is unworthy or notoriously incapable.

645 Mandarins of lesser importance are named by the province head 647 with the approval of the persons under his administration and of the superior resident.

647 Officials receive a salary only in the kingdom of Luang-Prabang 652 and in the provinces of Vien-Tiane and Muong-Hou. Everywhere else they must be content with a fee equivalent to one-tenth of the sums they collect as taxes.

[693] In their capacity as judges, the muong authorities also collect legal costs and shares in the sums of certain fines, as is the custom of the land.

647 Such, in its general outline, is the organization of the Laotian 576 administration. It generally functions well, is sufficient to the needs of the natives and makes it possible for us, despite the vast extent of our possession, to keep only a few European officials there.

• [92] The outer forms of respect towards great men, mandarins and anyone who holds a rank are dictated by Laotian etiquette, as in Siam. One does not speak to a king, a [495] [Illustration] [496] [Blank page] [497] prince or a leader as one would to an equal or an inferior. There are special expressions which are peculiar to the representatives of certain social classes or to the holders of dignities. But even while it conserves, at bottom, the ritual ceremonial forms, Laotian etiquette is paternal and much more spontaneous and genuinely respectful than elsewhere.

When they speak to the king, to princes, to great men, etc., inferiors prostrate themselves, with forehead on clasped hands, near the ground, or with their hands clasped above their head. Outside of this particular case, those present may remain squatting, smoke, talk, laugh and even disturb the audience somewhat. Moreover, no lack

Whatsoever of respect is to be seen in this liberty.

inverting the order of words. The negation bo is added. Is the gentleman home? is translated Tan you ban bo? Sometimes a single word contains a whole phrase:

mi = there are.
dai = it is possible.

Vocabulary. In addition to the pronunciation of sounds, one of the difficulties of the Laotian language is the distinction between noble language and popular language. The language is different when one addresses the bonzes, the high dignitaries, the king. There is a very rich concrete and abstract Laotian vocabulary which unfortunately is tending to go out of use. We have found in manuscripts Laotian words translating textually [78] abstract Pali words, but they have been gradually forgotten. The Laotians no longer read enough of their original texts. Cheap Siamese literature has invaded the country making the people abandon their own language.

One of the urgent tasks is to bring back the old Laotian texts into honor and to spread them abroad again among the public.

[79] LITERATURE AND MUSIC

In addition to the canonical religious literature already discussed, Laos possesses an important literary treasury. But as in Cambodia, Siam and Burma, this literature is anonymous. We are in the presence of epic texts of Indian origin, of legendary traditions, of apologues, of legal, moral or comic tales. There exist also novels, but as in French "romances" of the Middle Ages, they are by unknown authors. There is no equivalent in Laos of a Kalidasa or of a Li T'ai-po. No philosopher or dramatic author is known.

If the name of a French writer were mentioned whose manner is closest to that of Laotian authors, it would be that of Charles Perrault, and this in a word characterizes the type of Laotian literature. It excels in wonderful tales.

Literature of Indian Inspiration.

In addition to the Jatakas, Laos possesses at least two great texts of Indian origin. This is said under reservation of further discoveries, for in spite of the important work of Louis Finot, "Recherches sur la littérature laotienne," we are still far from knowing all the treasures of the Laos pagodas.

a) The Pancatantra. The first text is a collection of tales copied from the famous Indian Pancatantra. In the Middle Ages